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ABSTRACT

This chapter presents five case histories that describe literacy education practices in rural areas of England. All programs include the use of action research and the concept of open learning. Open learning is a nontraditional approach to education that includes the use of learning centers, computers, audio- and videotapes, and distance education. Tutors are available, but do not generally work one-on-one with students. They are seen as a shared resource, along with printed and electronic materials. Programs include an adult basic education group in west Dorset, a community education project in Suffolk involving peer tutoring with young adults, a core skills workshop at North Devon Tertiary College, a program that works with ethnic minority adults in a rural area of Cambridgeshire, and a program that works with unemployed adults in west Cumbria. Programs emphasize partnerships between the learners themselves, the importance of linking literacy with vocational studies, the relevance of peer tutoring, and the necessity of partnerships among local agencies for program implementation. This paper also addresses literacy education issues related to the need for partnerships, organizing resources, training and support of staff, relationship between students and tutors, respecting and responding to different cultures, and funding. To ensure that adult basic education programs in the United Kingdom produce more general social benefit, the funding targets set by all authorities must change to include the fostering of a community development approach. (LP)

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Chapter 11

OPENING UP LEARNING — RESPONDING TO THE LITERACY NEEDS OF THE RURAL COMMUNITIES

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RURAL STUDENTS & OPEN LEARNING

The five case histories described here represent different practices of delivery, and were chosen because they depended upon action research to some extent, and involved ideas of open learning. The term "open learning" has several possible meanings,[1] which are relevant to rural education. In its wider sense, this indicates provision which is not limited by place, time, or the need for previous qualifications, so that any student may make use of it in a way appropriate to his or her needs. It may include attendance at a learning centre either regularly or occasionally, the use of telephone tutorials, written assignments, or individual study projects.

The second definition of Open Learning is a more precise one, connected with the use of individual study in a centre where there is access to computers and other information technology, audio and video tapes, and possibly local closed-circuit television. Tutors are available, but do not generally work one- to-one with students, and are seen as a shared resource, along with the printed and electronic materials.[2] Both meanings are referred to in the case studies, as both are useful to many rural students in particular contexts.[3]

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RURAL AREAS & ADULT LITERACY IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

World-wide, there is a movement of population and economic power from the rural areas to the towns. In Britain, this process has been evident for at least 200 years, since the Industrial Revolution, and now means that most people live in towns.

The experience of some other European countries, of villages with aging populations almost deserted by young people, is less evident in Britain. Where depopulation is serious, it has often resulted from outsiders buying houses as second homes, at a price local people cannot afford. This has created half- empty villages in some popular holiday areas of Wales, Cumbria and East Anglia. In the past, the effect was countered by the availability of new, cheap housing owned by the local council and offered at subsidized rents; these allowed families to stay in their home area. Since the 1980s, local councils have been discouraged from building subsidized housing.

Town dwellers, including retired people, may move out to the countryside to find quieter surroundings. With the growth of computer-based businesses, some newcomers set up work at home, but make minimal contact with the local working community. Many of these affluent migrants have ignored the traditional social life of the district, with its complex network of related families, and its beliefs and customs. Younger members of local families may welcome the freedom and choice of action which has resulted, and the opportunity for school and college education, and urban-style entertainments. There has, however, been almost no effect in creating a strong base of local employment where the same young people can find work, or aim for promotion to managerial level, except for some services, such as school teaching and catering.

Because of mechanization, farming now occupies a fraction of its original workforce, and often less than a fifth of the present population. Employment is often seasonal, as in the holiday industry, and in farming at harvest time or lambing. Local contractors may take over the farm-based work of ploughing and combine harvesting. Traditional rural crafts, such as making fences and furniture have declined, because the labour cost makes them uncompetitive with factory-produced, imported products.

Community issues in rural areas have been researched, although rarely with a literacy component. Some organizations such as the Rural Development Council, REPLAN (a government funded body, now disbanded, concerned with unemployed people's education), and the Workers' Educational Association (a voluntary body) have funded short projects to research the needs for rural employment, businesses, transport and adult education.

There is at present (1993) a radical change taking place in the provision of adult literacy in England and Wales, as a direct result of Government policy.

While the necessity for literacy teaching and learning has now been accepted, its funding has been largely centralized and taken out of the control of local government. Until this year the main source of funding and staffing of regular literacy provision were the councils of the separate counties or metropolitan boroughs, along with Government-funded private commercial suppliers of training, and some voluntary schemes.

A variety of styles evolved over the last 15 years, partly because of the initial piecemeal growth of the literacy movement, and partly because of the general philosophy that the style of learning must be determined by local preferences and needs, albeit aimed at individual outcomes. This view accorded well with the traditional British expression of respect for individuality, and amateur (as opposed to professional) organization.

At the same time, action-research projects were organized, many through the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit (ALBSU), a national organization established to promote particular forms of functional literacy. Their support for a philosophy of personal development and achievement became a hallmark of ABE services, with the aims of empowering the individual student to control his or her own learning and destiny. Much of the community-based provision made use of ALBSU's nation-wide network of training and information, by means of newsletters and regional meetings. Adult literacy became known as Adult Basic Education or ABE, and often included tuition in everyday mathematics, and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).

Since the 1980's, another strand of provision has been the Government funding of private or local authority schemes for training unemployed people for future work. Funding for literacy services is now to be channelled from the central Government through the Colleges of Further Education. Formerly part of the local education provisions, colleges were a source of vocational and certified courses for the 16- to 19-year old age group, and increasingly for older adults returning to formal study. Some colleges already played a part in local literacy work, by setting up classes and short courses with a literacy element, such as Return-to-Learn courses, including writing skills. The colleges have now been made independent and self-managing, no longer controlled by local education authorities. Along with the regional Training and Enterprise Councils, TECs, which receive central funding for vocational training, colleges now have responsibility for the largest share of literacy work.

The effect of the changes in adult education remains to be seen. There is an opportunity to make literacy provision truly open in the more general sense, by giving a choice of styles, and locations of meetings within reach of home.

It is almost certain, however, that any content of community development, present in some former ABE schemes, will be entirely replaced by aims involving the learners' own individual outcomes. There is a danger that these will be defined solely in terms of gaining work, achieving promotion, or progressing to certificated or vocational courses. Community development, such as the wider awareness of the learners' own roles in local society, and of the ways of

determining the future prosperity or happiness of that society, will be largely left to chance. There may be a few literacy schemes with such aims, funded under other arrangements, such as local charitable organizations, national business-led trusts, or the European Social Fund.

FIVE CASE STUDIES

An Adult Basic Education GRoup in West Dorset

As in other areas of Britain, the offer of home-based individual tuition using volunteer tutors had formerly been seen as a remedy for the stigma of adult illiteracy. This was coupled with the view that individual tuition would be more effective for people who had failed in large classes at school.

Superficially, provision matched the definition of open learning which emphasises learners' choice in venue, timing, pace, materials and content. Tutors were supplied with resources, training and the support of a local organizer. In Dorset, one-to-one tuition was regarded as particularly appropriate for rural areas.

Attempts by educators or community workers to help others to identify or to articulate their needs are always problematic. This is particularly true with adults whose previous educational encounters may have been associated with failure or humiliation. Such learners will often communicate ambivalent or contradictory messages about their learning "needs". They may assert the wish to achieve success by "going back to basics" in the same oppressive and limited curriculum which led to failure in the past. This learner may alternatively be willing to explore wider approaches to literacy and education, which value his or her experience, and build on achievements in other areas of adult life. In the one-to-one relationship, whether in the home or in an Open Learning Centre, a tutor may support either course of action with the claim that the chosen program is meeting the learner's "needs".

When a group of adult learners with similar experiences is able to meet together, the tutor's control over the construction or interpretation of needs is diminished, while the learners are able to explore a range of possible shared or individual needs in discussion with each other.

In March 1991, a tape recorded discussion was held with such a group of adult learners. They met in Bridport with a paid tutor, jacky and two volunteer helpers. The adult students had a wide range of basic educational needs (literacy, numeracy, ESOL) and were at various stages of achievement and from differing

social backgrounds. The group provided a supportive environment and learners followed individual programs.

One student, G., commented on the tutor's contribution:

"She just finds what I need to go on, you see..."

and on the sense of common purpose in the group:

"Well, I find it's good to be together, and everybody has needs: they're all not the same and one can help another... It's a social group. It's not only to read and write but you find each other, and if somebody is not there you are missing them... and you share problems as well."

Vicki explained how her own "curriculum" was extended through the interests of others in the group:

"Well, we learn other people's things like (Liz) and her buses and holidays, and booking up; and we learn off of (Liz) about booking and how she goes about booking; where she gets her pamphlets from."

Chris related this to broader aspects of communication skills:

"Yes, it's all useful. Yes it is... I think I've got more confidence in myself. I talk to people a lot better than I ever used to. I don't mind going back to shops if things go wrong. A while ago I wouldn't do that."

Three of the leaders in this group had previous experience of working with a one-to-one voluntary tutor, but all felt that the group supported a more independent approach to learning. Liz spoke of the volunteer tutors:

"Well, they're with you all the time: they're over your shoulder, but in a group they go round and you can do lots of things on your own."

When it was suggested to Sandra that she might now have the confidence to work without a tutor, she replied:

"I think you need to come as a group. Now I think if I had to do it at home... Well, Jacky wanted me to do "Women: the Way Ahead" (an open learning pack) at home, because I wouldn't be able to get to Waymouth, but I know I wouln't do it. I'm just not motivated enough... It's laziness, isn't it really?

Any discussion of new models of literacy provision in rural areas must include an emphasis on the importance of social interaction to the learning process. If people are isolated in rural areas by the loss of village communities and the lack of public transport, there is a danger that distance learning approaches will only perpetuate such isolation. People may blame their lack of motivation on their own "laziness", rather than valuing the observation: "You need to come as a group."

The inter-dependance of members requires a commitment to regular attendance at specified times. The funders stipulate a minimum of six regular students to each paid tutor. In small rural communities, subject to the seasonal and casual employment patterns of agriculture and tourism, these numbers are

difficult to sustain, this removes some of the flexibility possible with one-to-one placements. Using unsupervised volunteers in smaller groups is rarely an answer; the training and commitment required of a group tutor cannot be expected of a volunteer.

Thus, while a group can offer adult learners the most "open" approach to defining their own needs and curriculum, this is often possible only by imposing "closed" restrictions on timing, attendance and venue.

A Community Education Project in Peer Tutoring With Young Adults

In Suffolk, a grant was obtained for a two-year project from the Rural Development Commission. The aims of the project were to identify the reasons for the low referral rate to ABE, and to establish flexible opportunities in the area to cater for local needs of young people. Suffolk Association of Youth already ran a scheme in Ipswich, the largest town in the county, using young people of 16 to 25 years of age to teach other young people who wanted to learn to read. They wanted to discover whether the scheme could be extended to rural areas.

Two ABE project workers were appointed, for 5 hours each per week, one specifically to work with adults under 25 years of age. A considerable investment was made in publicity, both in printed leaflets and in staff time. Volunteer tutors were recruited and trained, and matched with new students. Some tuition took place in the homes, but church halls, community rooms and youth clubs were used when appropriate.

The use of one-to-one tutors, as previously discussed, had advantages in the flexible timing of sessions, but serious disadvantages in the lack of interaction between students. The careful process of matching students with suitable volunteers involved a complex set of factors, including personality, age, sex, and places where the participants lived and could meet. Many young people did not have their own transport, and there were considerations of confidentiality. All these factors led to frequent delays in matching.

As a solution to the needs of rural learning, one-to-one cannot deliver truly "open" learning, and the cost of supporting tutors makes it an expensive method. The cost of a truly "open" provision in a rural area will always be greater than in a town.

An alternative way to make provision more "open" in terms of place and time would have been the use of resources for independent learning. This was not possible, as the available learning packs offered a "closed" content, not suited to individual students' needs, particularly at a more basic level. A decision had to be made whether to spend the modest funding on training and support of staff, or on staff time to develop packs of learning material responsive to individuals' needs. One of the deciding factors to use the funding for tutors, was the practice of the Suffolk Association of Youth as co-leaders. They saw a greater value in

developing the relationship of the young people concerned. Therefore independent learning was seen as less appropriate.

In the two years, about thirty people took up literacy and numeracy tuition in the area. Half were in the 16 to 25 age range. Awareness of the local service was increased, and referrals to regular provision continued after the project ended.

A Workshop in A Tertiary College

North Devon Tertiary College is the largest single provider of further education and training for adults and young people over sixteen years. The college aims to serve the needs of a large rural area with a population of 120,000 and receives funding for the development of Adult Basic Education. A recent growth in the college population increased students with lower levels of attainment in basic skills which presents the challenge of providing effective help to enable them to meet individual goals in education. A local development project was launched to develop core skills, across the college curriculum and to create 'open learning' provision for adults in the North Devon community.

The college chose the title of *Core Skills* in preference to Basic Skills because it focuses on the essential skills which are at the core of most education and training. Core skills encompass Basic Skills: reading, writing, listening, speaking, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages. In addition they include the learning skills increasingly required for recent developments in Tertiary Education placing a greater emphasis on project work, resource based learning, independent study, and the use of information technology.

The major task of the project has been to establish a new Core Skills Workshop in a redesigned centre for independent and supported study. Resources have been acquired which have a particular emphasis on independent learning and linked vocational skills which enable students to extend their study at home.

Part of our induction procedure includes an exploration of the best places to study. This is an issue for many students but particularly for parents who may not have established a set time or a private place for independent study. Such decisions may affect other members of the family and therefore it is necessary to incorporate: time management, negotiation, assertiveness, study skills, together with the specific skills of literacy in order to be able to study at home. The success or failure of individual efforts to return to study will often depend on the degree of support from other family members.

The workshop has proved to be attractive to adults for several reasons. Students may attend the workshop whenever they wish — they are not committed to set times. For many adults the workshop is their first contact with the college. The opportunity to improve basic skills provides an opening to further education and training and many adults progress to further courses with greater confidence. An increasing number of mature students are referred to the

workshop at the time of interview, to develop specific core skills for a vocational area. Existing adult students refer themselves to the workshop to develop skills to support their main studies.

Open Learning provision has been supplemented by short courses such as 'Return to Study' which combines study skills with information and guidance. Many adults are apprehensive about returning to study. The workshop provides a supportive environment and a positive approach to meet individual needs.

The focus on mature students within the project should not detract from a consideration of the needs of young adult students within tertiary education who generally do not seek help with basic skills. The establishment of the Core Skills Workshop in the heart of a tertiary college has made it easier for younger students to acquire this. Forty-eight percent of the self-referred workshop students were young people aged between 16 and 18 years. Younger students have responded positively to the adult environment of the workshop where they have been encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning.

Working With Ethnic Minority Adults in A Rural Area

The Huntingdon area of Cambridgeshire is rural, but experienced a period of rapid economic and demographic expansion in the 1980's, mainly in three towns, Huntingdon, St Neots and St Ives. The level of unemployment was relatively low and newcomers were generally attracted by cheap housing and job opportunities in expanding local industries. For many years two air force bases also supported the local economy.

Nevertheless, some people have been experiencing the phenomenon of "rural disadvantage". These include some of the members of ethnic minority groups living in the Huntingdon area, recently estimated to number about 2,500 (2% of the local population). Through local research it was possible to recognize a range of educational and vocational backgrounds, reasons for coming to Britain, family and economic circumstances, and length of residence (up to 50 years in some cases) with an increasing number of young people born and educated in the area.

This part of Cambridgeshire has been slow to recognize and respond to the multicultural dimension of its population. Many people in areas such as this still view Britain as a homogeneous society with unchanged, unchangeable traditions; any newcomer is seen at best as an unfortunate problem and at worst as a downright threat to stability. Such attitudes have not always been helped by the criteria attached to central government funding for identifying and meeting their needs.

Since 1966, when the additional needs of ethnic minorities were recognized, the Home Office (the government department responsible for immigration issues) has given substantial funding to county councils. When the provision of separate external funding is too closely identified with English language

deficiency, institutions may ignore the wider social and educational needs of speakers of other languages. It also places the onus on individuals to "learn more English" before attempting progression into education and vocational training, access to public services or full participation in society.

In Cambridgeshire most such funding was allocated to teaching posts in schools. Occasionally, as in the Huntingdon area, projects were also funded which had a community development dimension as well as a teaching role. In this case, over the 947 square kilometres, English language provision for adults amounted to ten hours per week for thirty weeks in the year, providing five groups in three towns. There was also some home-based one-to-one tuition.

The full-time organizer of English language support, which included literacy and numeracy, was also required to ensure the development of appropriate community support, both in accordance with the County Council's policy and in response to identified needs.

Increasingly the fieldworkers recognized that effective communication is a two-way process, and they realized that traditional styles of language learning were likely to be useless where transport problems isolated the learners. Further, the majority population was monolingual and generally had little language awareness.

The organizer's role therefore shifted from self-sufficient language teacher, trainer and organizer to a more outward-looking approach combining management, marketing and entrepreneurial skills. Much of the organizer's time was spent on establishing links with other education providers, networking to raise awareness of discriminating practices, promoting a small team of community interpreters to improve communication, and raising awareness of learners' needs and the use of the community as a resource for that learning.

For most adults, learning a new language is an exceedingly slow process which can suddenly disintegrate in precisely those moments of crisis when they most need to communicate effectively. The learning is hardly helped in areas where the rest of the community prides itself on being both "colour-blind" and "culture-blind".

Other people's perceptions of minority cultures can be extraordinarily limiting. Firstly by ignoring the rich heritage that ethnic minority individuals and groups have brought with them; secondly by denying them opportunities to maintain this culture through public services; and thirdly by failing to appreciate the dynamic nature of all cultures which not only change as a result of being transposed to a new environment, but also from generation to generation and even from one individual to the next.

Working With Unemployment in West Cumbria

West Cumbria Trades Hall Centre was established in Workington in 1981, to offer help to redundant workers after the closure of the foundry and iron works.

Other branches of national firms lost workers or closed down after this. By 1992 the unemployment rate was 18%. A project was needed to retrain people for new work, to set up local networks, and to lobby the authorities for better facilities such as housing and transport. At present, contributions come from three levels of local government and the work was administered by Cumbria Open Learning Trust.

The Centre provided educational guidance, computer classes, and referral to mainstream Adult Basic Education groups when desired. The coordinator was supported by a fixed term post of Project Worker, who also ran the Job Club, and a part time administrative officer. Volunteers were trained, largely for advice work, and some were recruited from the original clients.

A survey of nearly 200 local unwaged people's interests in education[4] found that most had left school with no formal qualifications, or had not studied beyond the then school-leaving certificate (CSE). The need for basic skills provision was confirmed by requests for English and simple maths, as well as a wide range of craft and hobbies courses.

The Trades Hall Centre undertook to publicize local educational opportunities, and to improve cooperation between agencies such as the health and social services, training organizations, churches and employers. In February 1992, a conference was organized to raise awareness in local and central government agencies of unemployed people's concerns. The proposed agenda for action included increasing the pressure for: partnerships between agencies, more development funds and housing, improvements in local facilities such as roads, training and equal opportunities for local people, provision of more jobs and improved working conditions and finally, support from local and national government.

Adult Learners' Week in 1992, a national event promoted by the National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education (NIACE) was an opportunity for publicity including a travelling exhibition in local libraries, and a market stall.

Outcomes have included personal gains in education, awareness of local issues, and ways to achieve self-help in looking for work. The computer courses were popular, and the provision of newspapers and Job Club notices were useful. It is difficult to see effects in the community as a whole, especially since much of the funding has now disappeared. The functional literacy element, however, has been noted, and the development of volunteers' skills through training. One Member of Parliament was quoted as estimating that each unemployed person costs the national economy £10,000 per year. Some of this could be recovered, and the people's dignity restored, if funds were put into creating local work projects.

GENERAL ISSUES

The need for partnerships

Literacy work needs to be linked with other activities, and may involve several agencies. Each case study illustrates different partnerships, showing some of the diversity which is possible in effective ABE work. Dorset emphasizes partnerships between the learners themselves. North Devon Core Skills Workshop argues the importance of linking literacy with vocational studies, and by involving other subject lecturers. The other three cases include partnerships between local agencies such as the Youth Service, funding bodies, and county councils. Cumbria has developed close links of ABE with practical issues, mainly employment.

Organizing resources

Resources include people, facilities, and learning materials. Practical access to transport and premises is of major concern to overcome rural isolation.

The types of resources and the teaching and learning styles which they best support have been discussed, and the variety of ways these may be organized in rural areas. The potential value of distance learning and individual study is set beside the need for more personal support where appropriate. The human resources of fellow learners, and of adequately prepared tutors are vital in maintaining the students' motivation, and counteracting personal isolation.

Open Learning Centres can offer distance learning resources such as packs, and audio and video tapes. Loan of printed materials may have to be organized by postal deliveries. Telephone and taped tutorials have been used in Leicestershire, with occasional meetings of small groups with a professional tutor.[5] All have cost implications.

Training and support of staff

Professional quality training enables local people to become effective tutors in their own home areas. In order to encourage a student-centred philosophy of ABE, the training needs to include counselling skills as well as teaching methods and the ability to use these flexibly in response to students' interests.

The importance in rural areas of adequately trained and supervised volunteers is reflected in one of the case studies. Some new students may need intensive support at first, preferring alternative styles of learning later on. There is a need to think again about the problems and potentials of involving volunteers in literacy provision. It is not a cheap option.

Training of ABE workers in community development methods is occasionally

attempted. A suitable package, including marketing methods, was produced by REPLAN.[6]

Relationships between students and tutors

The ultimate aim of tutors should be to encourage self-directed learning. The five case studies offer a range of examples from intense to fairly impersonal involvement with tutors. The risks of employing under-qualified volunteers or paid staff has been discussed, when a possessive and limiting relationship can prevent the widening of horizons. Clearly, a relationship which depends on domination by the tutor or the curriculum is very unlikely to introduce wider issues, or to allow the student to develop his or her sense of autonomy and social effectiveness.

Respecting and responding to different cultures

In rural areas, there is a variety of lifestyles and cultural groups. New immigrant populations present a challenge to the traditional culture of the area. Whether these incomers are sophisticated and affluent people, or are more disadvantaged economic migrants seeking work, their relationship with the local mainstream culture cannot be left to chance. As the recent experience of other European countries has demonstrated, lack of respect for the differences between cultures, and narrow perceptions of other people's lifestyles can have devastating effects.

This indicates a need for the careful initial assessment of learning requirements, not only of individuals, but of whole local populations. The Cumbrian project, by surveying local opinion, came nearest to an objective appraisal of local patterns, even though these were related mainly to work. Equal Opportunities issues, i.e. the respecting of other people's different needs and opinions, must be brought openly into discussions, as in the Cambridgeshire project. This attempted to educate the local community, and not merely to teach life skills to minority groups.

Funding

In some ways, funding has been the major factor affecting the style and effectiveness of literacy teaching in Britain, as shown in these examples, and in the experience of many ABE workers. The quantity of funding, and the conditions attached to a grant, (target clients, required aims and outcomes, time scale, etc.) have had profound influence on the philosophy of projects, and their survival.

The effects of an initiative may take years to become apparent. Adult

education is not a cheap service, because of the cost of professional tutors' pay, resources, travel expenses, and items such as creches, all of which are necessary in scattered rural populations. Tutor training and support are necessary to the quality of teaching and the relationship with students. Publicity is indispensable, for attracting new students, and as a tool for raising awareness in other people.

Resources may be expendable, or need to be distributed by post. Telephone contact is important for referrals and on-going support. There is a high student/teacher ratio, and some students make progress very slowly. Therefore Adult Basic Education will always be labour and resource intensive, even in Open Learning settings, and costly to support.

REFLECTIONS ON LITERACY PROVISION

Much of the information available on the effects of literacy provision is anecdotal, whether it refers to former learners, or to their communities.

Research into the effects of local history classes on the views of their participants[7] suggested that outcomes were largely decided by the overt aims and teaching content of a course. Reflection on social issues, and the relevance of history studies to present day conditions, was not considered by students unless it was written into the curriculum, and discussed purposefully. It may be that larger local issues in literacy should be included in interactions with students, so that they can identify not only their own needs, but the underlying causes of local problems, and ways to address these.

In the present political climate of Britain, such awareness of social needs is not officially encouraged. Government control of literacy funding through the Further Education Funding Council has recently made some of its allocation conditional upon outcomes such as the numbers of learners achieving jobs or entry to further courses. This limitation of possible outcomes fits another aspect of traditional philosophy of adult education in Britain, which considers the teacher to be more capable than the students. Even recent emphasis on student-centred approaches still encourages tutors to respond to students rather than to hand over complete control.

There is, however, a strong base of practical experience among ABE tutors in Britain. They tend to plan and carry out the work with a pragmatic approach, and then to reflect on theoretical considerations afterwards. There is a tendency to describe the methods employed, and above all the intentions rather than the results. The stress placed on having clear aims (required by applications for funding and management of projects) obscures the need for appraisal of the actual results while the project continues.

Therefore reflective evaluation of the work is often minimal, and there is little information on the factors in ABE provision which have had the most successful impact on community development. ABE and adult education in Britain are not

generally seen as tools for large-scale social change, either in towns or in the countryside. If providers of ABE wish to see functional literacy used for the good of local affairs in this way, (and such use would be seen to justify some of the expense, by helping to ensure a stable local economy), they would need to look not at the factors already inherent in ABE teaching in Britain, but at a very different issue: the aims and objectives of the funding agencies. The largest of these is now the national government. To ensure the use of ABE programs for more general social benefit, there must be changes in the targets set by all authorities in charge of funding, so that they foster a community development approach.

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